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cont. wherein the substance has a specific gravity ranging from four to 12 g/cm³. — 823, 413

23. (Amended.) An apparatus for preventing abrasion of a solid catalyst and/or a solid adsorbent while treating waste water, comprising:

a packed bed of the solid catalyst and/or the solid adsorbent; and

C₂ a water-permeable pressure layer having a load which can suppress a deformation of the packed bed of the solid catalyst and/or the solid adsorbent;

wherein the water-permeable pressure layer is provided on the packed bed of the solid catalyst and/or the solid adsorbent;

wherein the water-permeable pressure layer is a substance having a plurality of rigid metal particles or ceramic particles;

wherein the substance has a specific gravity ranging from four to 12 g/cm³; and

wherein the packed bed is provided in a wet-oxidation treatment unit.

Please add new Claims 31-38:

✓ --31. (New) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein:

C₃ said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are iron, copper, stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, zirconium, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, carbon nitride, or glass.

32. (New) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein:

said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, or zirconium.

33. (New) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are iron, copper, stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, zirconium, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, carbon nitride, or glass.

34. (New) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, or zirconium.

35. (New) An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein:

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said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are iron, copper, stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, zirconium, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, carbon nitride, or glass.

36. (New) An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein:

said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, or zirconium.

37. (New) An apparatus according to claim 30, wherein:

said particles for the dispersing and mitigating layer are iron, copper, stainless steel, HASTELLOY®, INCONEL®, titanium, zirconium, titania, zirconia, silicon nitride, carbon nitride, or glass.

38. (New) An apparatus according to claim 30, wherein: